**RESPONSE TO PROPOSSED HOUSE BILL 1481**

**PRIORITIES**

**Respectfully Submitted by Skeet Gaul**

**WTSEA Board of Directors/Arlington HS TSE Instructor**

Considering the current Target Zero priorities, the glaring elephant in the room is the absence of Traffic Safety Education (TSE).

All of the priorities listed in Target Zero are presently or could be included in the classroom and Behind the Wheel instruction. **So, why aren’t we prioritizing Washington State Traffic Safety Education?**

The State Legislature has spent energies and money in recent years to relieve the DOL of the burden of testing the public in order to get their driver’s license. The OSPI has done its best to wash its hands of the responsibility of Washington State TSE. But, nothing has been directed to improve Traffic Safety Education in our state.

Commercial driving schools have been given the authority to train and educate their own staff under DOL guidelines. Public TSE school instructors must follow the more stringent directives of the state OSPI, which doesn’t wish to acknowledge TSE responsibilities. I submit that **All TSE instructors** should be required to go through the same training and education. This would eliminate the patch-work approach we currently have. We already have a program in place at Central Washington University, under the direction of Scott Calahan. Public School applicants currently must pay for their training and education, which is much **more comprehensive in both time and requirements**. Commercial school applicants just have to put in the time and pass a test.

Following are suggestions for Improving Washington TSE:

1. Designate a Director of TSE who OSPI certified and experienced in Traffic Safety Education.
2. Establish a “central location/s” for the training of all TSE teachers, and require qualifications for certification to teach including a back-ground check. (ie: state patrol, teachers, doctors, lawyers, and other professions) This could incorporate satellite schools around the state to facilitate the process.
3. Examine and update the TSE curriculum (ie: Oregon)
4. Establish the random monitoring of all commercial and public school programs to ensure compliance and certification of teachers.
5. Re-allocate the current disbursement of monies received from traffic tickets in our state to be divided evenly between Road Maintenance, Law Enforcement and Traffic Safety Education.

I don’t see how we can seriously address the issue of reducing traffic safety deaths without including Traffic Safety Education at the **”top of the list”** of priorities. As “way out” as it seems I truly believe we need appropriately trained instructors to teach TSE if we are sincere about reducing traffic fatalities to zero by 2030… or anytime, for that matter.